

**ABSTRACT**

Methods and devices for immobilizing single polymeric molecules are disclosed. A method for isolating a single polymeric molecule comprises contacting polymeric molecules with agents under conditions that permit formation of agent-  
5 polymeric molecule complexes, said polymeric molecules immobilized at positions on a substrate separated by at least about two times the length of the polymeric molecules, said agents comprising a binding partner having binding affinity for a label of the polymeric molecules, and releasing at least one of the agent-polymeric molecule complexes from the substrate to isolate a single polymeric molecule.